

Midas Touch: Chapter 13

Cassidy knocked on the door and walked inside the office.

"Welcome back," Juliet said. "I trust your interview went well."

"Of course," Cassidy said. "I know exactly what they're looking for, and I have the right qualifications." Having the top buttons on her blouse open also helped a bit. She rubbed her shoulders. As useful as they were, her large breasts were killing her shoulders.

"Good, good," Juliet nodded. "Having someone on the police will be useful. Were you able to gain access to David's file?"

"Yes," Cassidy replied. "Though, it doesn't have very much information; just a simple runaway teenager case."

"That's relieving and worrying at the same time," Juliet said. "David's family must have told them what had happened. Did they not believe them? Why aren't they looking harder?"

"Maybe," Cassidy replied. "They don't know David was the cause of it."

"Still, it seems odd they wouldn't look harder. Any other information?"

"That detective is still snooping around. He found out David was staying in the old apartment and is asking to interview David's family. He also met Rachel's mother."

"That will be troubling," Juliet said. "I'll talk with Susan and Rachel about her. Try to lay false information to lead the detective off our trail. If that fails, we may have to introduce him to David."

"David won't like that," Cassidy pointed out.

"I know, I know," Juliet sighed. "I'll convince him. Hopefully. He can be quite stubborn sometimes. He also informed me his sister and the TA made contact."

"Really? How did that happen?"

"David's sister was handing out flyers at the university where the TA works; both of them have David's email. He sent a response telling them he's alright and she shouldn't look for him. A guy was with her when David's sister met the TA."

Cassidy rubbed her temples. "That complicates things. Should we bring them in?"

Juliet thought for a moment, then shook her head. "It's too early. We don't know how much the government is watching the sister. We need someone on the inside sooner than later."

"The next person coming in is our political candidate, right?"

"Yes. I hope him being a girl makes him less annoying." Juliet looked at a list. "Too many loose ends. Karlee. Sophia. Tessa. Hopefully, that's all. Let's get girls to attend Karlee's and Tessa's universities. Leah and Susan would be best. You keep focused on infiltrating the police."

"Will do," Cassidy said. "If that's everything . . ." She turned to leave.

"I have one more thing," Juliet said; a chill settled over the room and Cassidy felt sweat bead on her forehead. "Make sure another 'sleepwalking' incident doesn't happen. David has enough to deal with without his girls starting a war to get into his bed."

"R-right," Cassidy said. "I shall try my best." Cassidy escaped the room as fast as possible.

David eyed the three girls around the table. "Brick for lumber?"

"Me! Me!" Leah raised her hand energetically. They traded resources for the board game they were playing.

"Thank you very much; your turn Susan," David said as he built a road. He looked over at Florence, who kept on glancing at her cards and the guide about what she could build. "Ya hanging in there, Flor?"

"What? Oh, yeah," she responded. "Game's just a little confusing."

"Aren't you an incredible accountant or banker?" Susan asked.

"Managing finances is completely different," Florence replied. "I want to make sure I know all the rules so I can make the most optimal action."

Leah gave her a side hug. "No worries. We're just glad you're here. It's been, what, three days since you joined us? Have you got adjusted ok?"

Florence smiled and hugged her back. "Oh, definitely. The finances are in order; Nancy did an excellent job organizing everything before I got here. Also, Debby has been helping me train physically." She showed off her biceps and kissed them. "These little babies are growing nicely." Everybody chuckled. "Though, never in my life did I think I'd join a cult."

"What? We're not a cult," David said defensively.

"Um, we kind of are; your turn, Florence," Susan said. When David stared at her in disbelief, she raised her fingers to emphasize her points. "First, cults generally have strong leaders with devoted followers. All of us would be willing to die for you." Each of the girls nodded firmly.

"But, I don't want you to die for me," David protested.

"We know," Susan said with a soft smile. "But, that doesn't matter. Second, we are trapped here and given certain jobs for the improvement of the group."

"You guys can leave whenever you want," David argued. "I'm not forcing anybody to stay or to do anything they don't want."

"Ah, giving us the illusion of freedom," Susan retorted. "We have no identity outside of this group. Our old lives are gone, and we have nowhere to go. In addition, we have been brainwashed to follow your every whim. We don't even have the desire to leave."

David's shoulders slumped. "I didn't brainwash you guys on purpose."

"You kind of did," Florence piped up. "At least for me. You knew the consequences of touching me before, and I didn't."

"Me too," Leah said. "I was asleep when you touched me. You knew what was going to happen, and I didn't."

"Mine was an accident, so I'll give you that one," Susan smiled sweetly. David didn't feel better. Susan raised her third finger. "Three, you control your group through supernatural explanations."

"But it is supernatural," David whined.

Susan shook her head. "Sorry, that doesn't change a thing."

"Go easy on him, Susan," Leah said. "It's not his fault he didn't know he was starting a cult that can take over the world. Does anybody have stone they want to trade?"

"We're still playing?" David asked. "I'm going through some existential crisis here." Juliet and Nancy passed by the room, and David called out, "Hey, you guys don't think we're part of a cult, do you?"

Juliet and Nancy looked at each other. Juliet answered, "Of course, we are. It was designed with that in mind."

"I thought it was obvious," Nancy said.

Juliet raised a questioning eyebrow at the group and made a move to join the conversation, but Susan motioned to her that they got it covered. Juliet nodded and left with Nancy.

"As you continue to transform more people," Susan said. "You'll begin to step on other cults' toes, or as they're called now, governments, religion, and corporations. You need to use every advantage you have to carve your niche of power, or they'll eat you alive."

"That might be pushing your definition of cults too far," Leah said. "But, she does have a point. Cults are merely a form of power and organization. Don't get hung up on the negative connotation of the word."

David moped. He hadn't wanted to be part of a cult ever in his life, but now he was leading one.

Leah broke the silence. "I'm heading out tomorrow to be with your sister. And Susan's heading to watch Tessa. Anything we should know? Your turn."

"Ah, that's tomorrow, huh?" David said. "I can't say. Karlee is completely different than Karl. In her emails, she seems . . . quite devoted. As for Tessa, I don't know her well. She seemed nice enough."

"Going back to college," Susan said wistfully. "Never thought this day would come. Don't forget me!" She winked. "Your turn."

"So, when's the next person going to come in?" Florence asked.

"You mean the next cult member," David responded dryly. "In about two hours. Paul Graver, the politician."

"Graver is coming in?" Susan asked.

Florence snorted. "Of course, that snake would want to extend his life."

Leah giggled. "Didn't you do the same thing?"

"Yeah, well, I'm different," Florence stammered. "I have skills that will be useful to David's cult. Money makes the world go around. Not like useless politicians."

"Stop saying we're a cult," David pouted as he studied the game. "So, both of you know him?"

"Of him," Susan said. "He was governor for a few years then he tried to run for the Senate. He was caught in a scandal about a decade ago and has been out of the public eye since."

"I know him personally," Florence said. "Don't trust a word he says. He changes his views based on the highest bidder. Granted, Fredrick was always one of the highest 'donators', so he didn't

have much to worry about. But he is a smooth talker and knows his way around other politicians. He might have his uses. Julius knew him quite well."

"What was his wife like?" Leah asked. "Since we'll be mainly dealing with who he loves, not who he is now."

"I wouldn't consider that a marriage of love, only of convenience," Florence explained. "Divorced around the scandal."

"Time to roll the dice then," David said. "But that's true with almost everyone. Hope we'll be able to trust her."

They moved on to lighter topics and continued with the game until David had to go greet his new 'cult member'.

Paul Graver waltzed into Julius's mansion; he used a cane, not because he needed one, but because he thought it made him look more distinguished. He refused to call the mansion Juliet's, she was only an upstart wench who happened to gain the favor of her estranged father. She was a pebble to be stepped on. Julius. Now, he was a person he could admire, if only secretly. He nodded at 'Nancy' as she let him inside. "This way, Governor Graver. I shall show you the way."

"Thank you, miss," Paul replied with his most charismatic smile. When Nancy turned, he glared at her as he followed; no way in hell was that the real Nancy. He wanted to get to the bottom of this scam. He had spent a lot of money researching Juliet and this youth potion, but nothing turned up. She did an excellent job covering up her tracks.

Finally, they arrived at the meeting room. Juliet stood with a young man and a woman security guard. Nancy joined them, holding a clipboard in her hands. Three women, all incredibly beautiful. Paul had to be careful not to leer at them; all in good time. Maybe if the youth potion worked he'd have some fun. Instead, he put on his best smile again. "Juliet, my dear, thank you for accepting my proposal."

Juliet stared at him flatly. "The little thieves you sent in doubled the price."

Paul didn't bat an eye. "I'm not sure what you mean, but if this potion does what you say it does, I'll gladly pay double the asking price." Those stupid thieves brought back a normal bottle of wine; he realized he'd gotten caught, but he was surprised they still offered him the potion, even if they doubled the price.

"Let's get this over with," Juliet said. She nodded at the young man. He stepped forward with a bottle of wine and a cup. He poured the cup and handed it to Paul.

Paul accepted it graciously and examined the red liquid. He smelled it. It smelled exactly like the drink he'd stolen. He grinned at Juliet. "This is the youth potion." Juliet nodded. "And it's not poisoned?"

Juliet sighed. "Why would we poison you, Mr. Graver? You're an old politician way past your prime. If we kill you, we wouldn't receive any of the money for the potion, and I suspect we'd have a hit squad sent within the hour."

Paul nodded in approval, still with his fake smile. "You're not a novice after all. You are quite right." He held up a phone. "If I don't make a call within half an hour, nobody in this mansion leaves alive." The young man looked nervous, but the women were calm and composed.

"Just drink already," Juliet glared.

"As you wish." Paul downed the glass. Nothing happened. It tasted like regular wine. As he was staring at the cup, waiting for something to happen, somebody grabbed the cup out of my hand. The young man. The hand that he touched to grab the glass went numb. Paul glared at the young man before he covered it with a smile. The young man backed away without saying a word.

"Just let him be," Juliet said, her mouth twitching in a devious smile. "I'm interested to see his type."

"My type?" Paul asked. His voice cracked, and his smile vanished. He sensed somehow he got tricked. He attempted to turn on his phone and call for an extraction, but a strong hand pulled the phone out of his grasp. His hands were held firmly behind his back. The security woman. She shook her head. "Just relax. You'll get your phone back after it's done; we need you to call off the attack after all. David, how long is it this time?"

"Fi-five minutes," the young man, David, stammered. "Juliet said to keep it short for him."

Paul's mind raced. Something was happening. What, he didn't know, but he knew he needed to get out. He had another emergency button in his pocket, but the woman held him firm. His body felt odd, like a warm ooze flowing through his bloodstream. He breathed heavily. He was definitely poisoned. His chest felt like it was on fire. Heart attack? Maybe. The pressure kept increasing, and his strength was leaving him. "I dare say, unhand me, you brute," Paul said. Why did he say it like that? His voice sounded foreign to his ears. It was higher and . . . was that a British accent?

Paul felt his clothes becoming loose around his body. The suit that was tailored perfectly to his body no longer fit. He felt tears welling up in his eyes; he shook softly. "Why, why why? Ah! What in the world . . ." Another sudden burst of pressure erupted in his chest. Then - Pop! The buttons on his shirt flew off as two gigantic orbs exploded out of his chest. His mouth was

unhinged as he looked down. He couldn't see his feet. Hell, he couldn't even see the floor. He wanted to touch them, just to feel if they were real, but the brutish woman still had his hands held behind his back.

Paul's entire body creaked with loud snapping sounds. The presence of the woman behind him grew. He turned and saw he only was a head shorter than her! More than that! Terror rushed through his veins, and he squirmed even harder to get out. The woman didn't seem like she wanted to hurt him, so she lost her grip as he twisted. Paul escaped! He immediately reached for his pocket for the emergency button. But his pocket was gone. His oversized clothes were changing. Pink? Silk? The legs had merged and expanded out to a nice frilly pink dress. He watched as his shirt and jacket shrunk to fit his new body size and merged with the dress below. The skirt of the dress rose to his knees. The dress perfectly molded with his thin feminine figure and massive breasts, then the neckline plunged to show off his bosom. Something brushed his neck. Yellow ringlets dropped around his head.

Paul felt dizzy. It had all happened so fast! He hadn't even noticed when his manhood disappeared, but he checked. Yep, it was gone. "Oh my," Paul said in his feminine British accent. "I feel so peculiar. Why is my diction so, so odd?"

"Take a look at yourself in the mirror," David said. The young man's words hit Paul like a truck. Paul's heart raced and her face felt flush. When they locked eyes, Paul almost collapsed. David ushered Paul over to the full-length mirror; Paul unconsciously linked arms with him as they walked, her dress swaying back and forth with her hips.

The woman looked to be in her early twenties in a cute pink dress. She had huge breasts; E-cup by Paul's best estimation, and she was a good judge. She was maybe 5'6", wait, 5'4"; She was wearing heels; how had she missed that? It had felt so natural. She had long golden hair done up in elaborate ringlets and a face that looked like she was always pouting with pursed lips and eyes that looked slightly too large.

"I didn't expect this to be his type," a voice said nearby. Juliet. Paul harrumphed at her, looking down her nose at the inferior woman.

She turned sweetly to David, grabbing him by the hand. "Whatever does she mean, dear, my type?"

"Well, um, there was no such thing as the youth potion. Instead, whoever I touch, becomes that person's ideal girl, both in body and personality."

Paul's mind raced. Indeed, she did feel quite different. She even considered herself a woman, even if she was a man a few minutes ago. She looked back at the mirror, considered, and nodded curtly. "It is acceptable. I will stay here with you. You will call me Sophia."

"Um, that names already taken," David said sheepishly. Juliet snickered.

"Who, who dared take my name?" she replied, offended.

"She's no longer here," David said. "But, I'd rather not have repeat names if we can help it."

"Fine, you may select my name, good Sir David."

"Your name was Paul, why not Paula?" The look on her face gave him the answer he needed.

"Ok, what about, um, Eliza?"

"Eliza, E-li-za," she said, testing the word. "Yes, I like it. You, guide me to my living quarters."

Eliza pointed at Debby. "I hope you have sufficient accommodations for my needs."

Debby looked at David, uncertainly, but David shook his head and gave Eliza a stern look.

"Eliza, please don't make commands of the people here. You are not in charge and will not treat my precious friends as servants."

Once again, Eliza's heart raced. How could this young man cause her to feel this way? And . . . did she enjoy getting scolded? Hmm, learn something new every day. She smoothed her features. "Well, since you requested. What shall I do?"

"First off, are there any other traps Paul set that will cause us problems?" Juliet asked. "We don't want any surprises."

Eliza sniffed. "He may have had one or two more things planned."

"Nancy," David said. "Can you go with Miss Eliza and make sure she has everything she needs and show her her room."

"Of course, David," Nancy said with a nod.

Eliza followed Nancy, listing all of the things she'd need. Especially clothes. She had to look pretty for David.

Juliet watched Nancy and Eliza leave the room. Good riddance. Juliet wasn't eager to be working with her, especially since she would be playing a pivotal role.

"Well, she's going to be a headache," Juliet said.

"She wasn't too bad," David chuckled. "Ok, maybe she was. Do you think she'd be able to get that internship at the capital?"

Juliet laughed. "She'll do just fine. A politician will scoop her up as an assistant. She'll be able to use Paul's knowledge to navigate into the perfect position. Though, you may need to be the one to tell her. She doesn't seem to like me very much. We'll have to work on her accent."

"I doubt she likes anybody except David," Debby chimed in.

"Let's give her a chance," David said. "It does take a bit of time to get adjusted. But, yes, I can be the one to tell her. Can you give me all of the details?"

"Of course, we'll do that in an hour or so," Juliet said; her business persona slightly evaporated as she looked at David to reveal a teenage girl in love, which immediately disappeared the next instant. "I need to get back to work-"

Debby's phone rang. The front gate. She quickly answered. Juliet worried that one of Paul's plans activated. Debby turned to Juliet. "Peter's here."

Juliet sighed in relief, then groaned. "Of course, he'd come unannounced."

"Who's Peter?" David asked.

"Julius's son."

A few minutes later, Juliet was alone with Peter in her office. Debby and David were in a secret room where they could overhear the conversation. Peter was in his mid-forties. Slightly overweight with dark hair. He wore a permanent sneer.

Peter glared at Juliet. "I take it you know who I am."

Juliet nodded. "Of course. Julius talked about you often. How you were such a disappointment of a son."

"How dare you-"

"Oh please," Juliet retorted. "Both of us know you were disowned by Julius. And yet, he still gave you a portion of the inheritance. You got more than you deserve."

"And who are you? Some golddigger who took advantage of an aging old man."

"As you know, I am his estranged daughter."

Peter barked a laugh. "That's about as likely as me winning Miss Universe."

"That can be arranged," Juliet said with spite. She took a deep breath. "Peter, Julius made his will quite clear. Just take your hundred grand and go."

"I'm taking this to court! Something doesn't feel right. I'm going to get what I deserve." Peter stormed out of the office, and Debby escorted him to the door.

David cautiously approached Juliet. "Are you alright?"

Juliet deflated into her chair. "Julius was a horrible father. I can see that easily now. I rarely spoke to my only son as he grew up, and now he's some entitled manchild."

"Are-are we going to have to worry about him?" David asked. He had an intense fear of getting sued.

Juliet laughed. "No, no judge will pick it up. The will is ironclad, though it will be nice to have an in-house lawyer. Peter has no ground to stand on. That prick will only cause us a slight headache."

"You sure you don't want me to chase after him and touch him?" David asked. "We can see if we can truly make him into Miss Universe."

Juliet laughed as David put his hand on her shoulder. She leaned into him. Ah yes, he grounded her and made her feel alive.